

# Minutes

**Date: Time:** Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2024  
14.00pm – 16:00pm

**Venue:** IMC, University of Warwick / Microsoft Teams ( Hybrid Meeting)

**Attendees**

Margot James (Chair)  
Samantha Taylor – Ecologist, Canal and Rivers Trust  
Suzanne Ward – Area Environment Manager, Environment Agency  
Rachel Jones – CEO, Act On Energy  
Clare Wightman – CEO, Grapevine  
Prof. Stephanie Panichelli-Batalla – Academic Lead for Sustainability, University of Warwick  
Matthew Rhodes – Director, Camirus  
Paul Warrington – Relationship Director, Lloyds Banking  
Adam Denny – Citizen Housing  
John Martin – Solution Strategy & Coordination Lead, E.ON  
Faye Rouse (via Teams) – Severn Trent Water

## Coventry City Council

Cllr Jim O'Boyle (Vice Chair and Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, CCC)  
Colin Knight - Director of Innovation, CCC  
Rhian Palmer-Strategic Lead - Green Futures, CCC  
Bret Willers - Head of Climate Change & Sustainability, CCC  
Laura Waller-Digital Services and Inclusion Lead, CCC  
Tamara Duignan- Business Analyst - Service Design, CCC  
Manjit Bath- Business Development Manager, CCC  
Darren O'Shaughnessy- Communications Manager, CCC  
Sam Pinfield- Divisional Support Mgr (BIC) - (Secretarial Support) , CCC

## Apologies

Julie Nugent- Chief Executive, Coventry City Council,  
Andy Williams– Director of Business, Investment & Culture, Coventry C Council,  
Sarah Windrum – Future Mobility Cluster Lead, Horiba Mira,  
Duncan Healey– Highways Environmental Lead, Galliford Try,  
Lisa Hofen- Coventry University  
Selina Fletcher – Coventry University,  
Clive Robinson – Sustainable Development Manager, University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire,  
Helen Wheatley – Director Institute of Engagement, University of Warwick  
Russ Hall, WMG - University of Warwick,  
Audrey O'Connor – Canals & Rivers Trust,  
Charlotte Heeney – Severn Trent,  
Chris Lovatt – Chief Operating Officer, E.ON UK,  
Liz Hopkins – West Midlands Fire Service

Ref	Agenda Item
1.	<p><b>Welcome &amp; apologies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MJ welcomed all to the meeting.</li> <li>• MJ thanked everyone for attending the photograph session.</li> <li>• MJ thanked Russ Hall for providing the facilities and catering.</li> <li>• MJ extended a warm welcome to new member, Paul Warrington – Relationship Director, Lloyds Banking.</li> </ul>
2.	<p><b>Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Action Plan</b></p> <p>RP presented her slides to the group to provide a summary of progress on the Climate Change Strategy &amp; Action Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strategy review workshop was held in July and recommendations have been incorporated into the final draft. It was a useful and constructive session, with feedback received from all Pathway groups which included aspects such as the strategy was too long, too technical in parts, more imagery and graphs were required, and actions must be outcome led with the vision and USP for Coventry needing to be made clear. There is a need for recognition and balance to both nature and climate emergency objectives. Since then, further sessions with Pathway groups have been held, revised versions have been sent for review and feedback is presently being worked through.</li> <li>• Earlier this summer a useful workshop was held with a focus on ‘Just Transition,’ to look at what this means for the City. Consensus was that the strategy wasn’t doing this full service. A lot of work has now been done on the principles of Just Transition to embed into the draft.</li> <li>• Current position is that strategy and action plan is now being finalised ready for approval at the Cabinet meeting in November. There will be a soft public launch of the Strategy which is currently being planned and videos are being made ready for social network comms. RP thanked everyone who has helped on this. RP advised that there will be updated comms strategy guidance for member organisations regarding the strategy launch.</li> <li>• The focus will then be on the action plan, reviewing what the priority projects are; achieved by looking to deliver quick wins and which projects are going to have biggest impact, with available resources and consideration for funding.</li> <li>• Next steps thereafter for the Board will be to revisit Terms of Reference for Pathways and Climate Board meetings. Useful initial discussions have already been held.</li> <li>• In addition, monitoring and reporting against the Action Plan to see progress is vital - there is a need for funding and resources to underpin this.</li> </ul>

Ref	Agenda Item
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Communications &amp; Engagement plan is really key and must reflect the Just Transition principles, which needs to be the framework for how activity through the strategy is done. This is important for consistency in approach, on communication, reaching and working with communities and to ensure that citizens are not just being 'talked at' but collaborated with.</li> <li>• Resources will be reviewed internally to ensure the best support of delivery available with consideration that resources are restricted so this will need creativity. The West Midlands Combined Authority Devo Deal funding is a real opportunity and work is ongoing to look at how this can be best used. SEP too is a key part of this.</li> <li>• There are 200 potential projects so there is recognition of the need to stay focussed on priorities. The longer-term vision of the strategy goes up to 2030. Funding will be critical.</li> <li>• A key part of this is raising the profile- there is a lot happening in Coventry, however we need to be pushing our comms to reflect e.g. CVLR, Coventry having the largest charging infrastructure outside London, the City as an exemplar etc. These projects have their own comms messages but we need to pull all of this together which is currently being explored – a working group under 'Electric City' has been established and may be a catalyst for comms</li> <li>• RP passed on her thanks to everyone for their efforts and continued support as we move into delivery phase.</li> <li>• RP will send the revised final draft strategy in next 2 weeks, with an opportunity for final comments welcomed (although no fundamental changes expected at this stage). The strategy should be read in conjunction with the action plan. MJ reminded attendees that the group should continue with their support on the document.</li> <li>• MJ asked for any questions. AD asked if organisations will be recognised as contributors. RP stated that in the Strategy there is an introduction from Cllr O'Boyle, a foreword from the Board and then member photos/organisation logos featured together with a statement on contributions and involvement.</li> <li>• MJ thanked RP and asked if there are any further questions. None were received.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Pathway Group Updates (all Chairs)</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<p><b>Route to Net Zero - Rachel Jones (CEO- Act on Energy)</b></p> <p>RJ presented her slides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RJ advised that the Pathway group had made a name change from Low Emissions to the 'Route to Net Zero' Pathway group to help explain exactly what it is and the work covered.</li> <li>• The Pathway tries to meet in person because face-face meetings lead to other useful conversations happening, which is extremely beneficial.</li> <li>• New members have joined i.e. Citizen Housing, Integrated Care Board, Universities, Coventry Building Society and Lloyds Bank.</li> <li>• The pathway group is trying to look at how best to interlink as a group, internally and to other Pathways. With a broad area to cover, RJ advised that the focus per meeting will be on a specific subject area; the previous two meetings have focused on Housing. The most recent meeting focused on 'Just Transition' principles, Coventry as a Marmot City and what that means in terms of being taken forwards.</li> <li>• As Chair, RJ stressed that member relationships formed within Pathway groups are very important for feeding up to the Board, as well as working on the Strategy and Action Plan. As Chair, RJ is also trying to attend other Pathway groups.</li> </ul>

Ref	Agenda Item
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication, engagement and partnerships are very important i.e. how do we ensure that we take everyone on the journey and how can we support each other to do this.</li> <li>• As a Board, we need to think about the language of climate change, are we confident that the language being used is widely understood? A recent survey suggested that the majority of people do not understand common, key terms and phrases. Therefore, it's very important to get communication and language correct and right to avoid people being switched off. Words and phrases need to be explained. SW stated that she agreed with the confusion over language – this should be key for all. Cllr' O Boyle added that the final draft should be written in language that people understand, which is accessible. RP agreed that it is also important to get a young person's view of the strategy, she is keen to do this and get it into schools.</li> <li>• MJ asked as transport is in this Pathway if discussions and input from WMG and the Council had happened on CVLR, Battery Site/ electrification of transport. RJ advised that discussions on transport had not yet occurred. MJ stated that RH can help. Cllr O' Boyle stated that Electric City is leading the way – the profile must be raised, and legislators need to assist in making this happen.</li> <li>• RJ added charging points, transport, heat networks and SEP are all linked up on Pathway group. Next meeting will focus on Heat networks.</li> <li>• MJ thanked RJ for her comprehensive update.</li> </ul>
3.2	<p><b>Adaptation &amp; Resilience - Suzanne Ward (Environment Agency)</b> SW presented her slides.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The key activity has been further work from the workshop held on Adaption &amp; Resilience plan.</li> <li>• The group has been looking at challenging the identified actions set, to address the risks for Coventry – are there any additional actions needed? In addition, identifying suitable lead organisations and partnerships for the priority actions – do they know who they are and how does this agenda fit in with their own organisational agendas.</li> <li>• Coventry now needs to feedback on progress made on Climate Change action to Government via the Adaption report (ARP). At present, DEFRA do not have a set output for this so work is being undertaken to create metrics that works for this purpose. Severn Trent and other members have reported on ARP however this is the first time Local Authorities are being asked. BW advised that DEFRA is not being prescriptive and is keen to hear from Local authorities involved - Coventry City Council have offered to be a pilot to help shape process. Previous ARP reports relate to organisations only and not location, so the Council has asked if this can be an opportunity to have a geographical report, as well as an organisational version. BW advised that Resources secured from the Met office to help produce reporting plans on meteorological changes for our area.</li> <li>• SW summarised concluding that the focus of the Pathway group for the rest of this year will be supporting Coventry on the Adaptation &amp; Resilience plan, ARP and then the group will want to understand what the pathway role will be moving forwards in terms of implementation of the plan and how this will link into other groups activity.</li> <li>• RP added in terms of comms &amp; engagement on the Resilience &amp; Adaption plan, thought is needed on how this goes out to make sure it lands right; an interactive approach may be best.</li> <li>• MJ advised that she looks forward to what we can do in this space.</li> <li>• MJ – Thanked SW for her overview.</li> </ul>

Ref	Agenda Item
3.3	<p><b>Fairer Green Futures – Claire Wightman (CEO – Grapevine)</b></p> <p>CW provided a summary of the slides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group has been advocating for championing the idea of ensuring that Coventry transitions to a low carbon economy in a fair way, not forgetting people from poorer communities and does not leave them behind. Detailed slides are now available for members to read.</li> <li>• As background, this pathway group commissioned research and recommendations from Julia Slay – her task was to source the best information and guidance on what a fairer transition to a green economy means and how other Cities were doing this.</li> <li>• The follow up to this was a delivery of a workshop lead by Julia Slay to review what Coventry had on this already - what best next moves should be made and who are the potential stakeholders of influence. There is very little going on elsewhere in the Country at City level, so this is a big opportunity for Coventry to be a trailblazer.</li> <li>• The upshot from the workshop was the Just Transition foundation objectives are the first things that need to be done, and these have been submitted to the strategy, in brief: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Data – we do not understand enough as a City about the sectors, communities at risk when we transition. Where are the opportunities – we need data.</li> <li>○ Resources – we need focus and drive to find ways to resource efforts across the City to achieve just transition.</li> <li>○ Engagement – Climate change can be something that polarises – engagement must be about involvement.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• JM asked if we have engaged with Scotland (where funding exists) and the approach taken there. SW advised that talks have commenced with Glasgow.</li> <li>• HW added that this is a cross-cutting theme. There are a set of eight principles (as per slides) which should act as a solid self-check for anyone involved e.g. linking up with Marmot City and Public Health to address inequalities, communicating with people about the climate change crisis, workers, businesses - how are we corralling all, empowering communities at local levels and standing in solidarity with those experiencing the worst impacts of climate change. Coventry is a diverse city – our citizens are affected by global events.</li> <li>• MJ added that the last aspect is particularly inspiring. Cllr O'Boyle said it is vital that we are able to take all people on this journey.</li> <li>• MR stated that Just Transition is very important, language must be recognised and also taking on board feedback from people where we are asking them to change their lives. Just Transition is such an opportunity to effect change.</li> <li>• AD added that we should be pushing this agenda more with construction industry, we should engage with them on training, green skills and retrofit.</li> <li>• RP stated that there is a Green Skills working group that is working to support delivery of the Council's Skills Strategy attended by public and private sector representatives – WMG is leading a piece of work on this to better understand what Green Skills mean for Coventry to develop a route map for building provision and opportunities. There is already a lot of training offered but often oversubscribed. RP will bring this back to Board. RJ added that it is important to consider customer service skills as human resources are going to be needed to support people through change.</li> <li>• RJ added that she felt that member organisations should sign up to the 8 principles. MJ said that this is an excellent suggestion. ACTION- Discuss Sign up process at the next board meeting in January 2025</li> </ul>

Ref	Agenda Item
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor O'Boyle added that he is visiting E.ON to talk to young people about Green skills apprenticeships. Retrofit work is impressive, cc.2000 properties completed, approx. 30 million capital investment made when all the grants are included. However, there are cc.143,000 private residential homes in Coventry—how many are fit for retrofit, how many could afford retrofit and new builds are not being built with renewables as standard. If we are going to be serious about change, financial products are needed to help. What work is taking place with the finance industry to make some of this potentially affordable for residents. PW said that Lloyds (and other lenders) do offer mortgage incentives and cash back schemes to do improvements to properties e.g. solar panels, loft insulation. In terms of SMEs, there is finance in place, green funding can be used to save to help with initiatives. More work is required on communications around this, and in general, we should communicate in a way that brings hope.</li> <li>• MJ thanked CW for her update.</li> </ul>
3.4	<p><b>Nature Based – Rhian Palmer on behalf of Ed Green (CEO, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust)</b></p> <p>RP provided an update on behalf of the Nature Based pathway group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature based pathway group recently held. Good discussion on activity made in the in group, strategy and the work of the group going forwards.</li> <li>• Key headlines – the local nature recovery strategy is being led by Combined Authority and involves a number of stakeholders. It sets out where the City's priorities need to be in terms of investing in nature and expectation is that strategy will be complete next spring. First iteration of data received which will inform projects.</li> <li>• We need to integrate nature as part of the development that is taking place in the City. There is a lot of greenspaces in City, but there are access issues to it – where are the opportunities, for example looking at street trees and rain gardens. This is an important piece of work as part of our strategic green and blue mapping that the Council will develop, looking at public and private land ownership so stakeholders may be approached.</li> <li>• Data gathering – local nature recovery strategy will be a baseline- how we get communities engaged will form a part of this – develop friend groups, greenspaces and parks, real opportunities as we have communities who want to help.</li> <li>• Nature skills – recognition that we need to be talking about Green skills from a nature base perspective, the Group is going to Feed into the green skills strategy to develop this.</li> <li>• Quite a lot of activity on WMCA local investment, local investment in natural capital programme. Invited to submit bids across the City. A lot of work ongoing around bids and securing investment and this will help to bring some projects to life.</li> <li>• Good news on funding on tiny forest projects across the city. £300,000 grant received. The Council will lead, with support from Earthwatch on this.</li> <li>• Department for Education is launching a national partnership, so this is a great opportunity to link in Coventry schools. It is looking at Greenspaces, how we can manage sites across our schools. In addition, every school is going to have to have a sustainability champion. Lots of opportunities – very positive.</li> <li>• PW advised that Lloyds have a partnership with Woodland Trust on planting trees – they have targets to meet however are experiencing issues identifying locations. RP added that land is an issue, talks with E.ON and Motofest ongoing as there are a lot of trees to plant. AD added that he thinks that talks with Citizen are in place to look at what to do with redundant sites. Planting on the land could be provided by Citizen; maintenance is the issue however - could this come through friends groups?</li> </ul>

Ref	Agenda Item
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TD asked how does planting trees factor in new builds. RP advised that this will be addressed via the Local Plan Review and there is already supplementary planning guidance in place around this.</li> <li>• SW asked if some of the trees could be given as community growing projects.</li> <li>• MJ – Passed on her thanks to Rhian.</li> </ul>
3.5	<p><b>Circular Economy – Laura Waller (Digital Services &amp; Inclusion Lead, CCC) &amp; Tamara Duignan (Digital Inclusion Co-ordinator, CCC)</b></p> <p>LW/TD provided a summary of their slides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Cov Connects’ is Coventry’s digital inclusion programme designed to reduce digital inequality across the City. Work takes place across various sectors Public, Private and voluntary. It is a social inclusion programme, part funded by NHS.</li> <li>• It is a comprehensive programme looking at access and connectivity to technology and skills. Digital exclusion is complex.</li> <li>• Cov Connects Device Bank is a programme on Digital recycling – idea of the programme is to get technology into households. 7% households have no access to a device (10000 homes)</li> <li>• TD advised that the programme has been live for over a year – large initial investment from WMCA. There was a need to scale up thereafter and partnerships across the city were sought and an agreement with NHS was created.</li> <li>• 3000 devices have been delivered via the programme, 100+ companies received and wrap around support has been provided.</li> <li>• The programme also takes a circular economy approach – the case for reuse, looking at addressing e- waste and talking to other providers to help achieve this.</li> <li>• Proof of concept now in place for this and the programme is now working on scaling up possibilities to be able to ramp up providing devices.</li> <li>• Funding has been received from a bid to Hubbub and Virgin media – £80k which has meant that funding for 2 ICT technicians is in place to process devices.</li> <li>• LW advised that as part of the proof of concept, a carbon calculator has been produced to measure impact on additional recycling, so every device will be tracked for repair and reuse. Also looking at economic model, sustainable buy back model and social model to evaluate this programme for a longer term and wider scope – could Coventry be an exemplar model for this programme</li> <li>• LW thanked the Board for their assistance in helping to obtain buy in for the project.</li> <li>• MJ commented that she thought that this was excellent progress and very good that outcomes are already being seen.</li> <li>• SW commented that she thinks that this is a fantastic project. She asked if there is a complete whole duty of care along the whole journey to the end of the recycle point. TD advised that an ethical recycler has been chosen. LW asked that any additional guidance is welcomed as this project is still in proof-of-concept phase. Reuse is the priority.</li> <li>• JM asked if the project is open to any voluntary group. LW advised that the project will work with any group. JM added that E.ON work with a lot of SMEs on energy audits so there could be some scope here. LW added digital is an enabler, suggestions will be followed up.</li> <li>• MJ thanked LW and TD for their presentation and update.</li> </ul>
4.0	<p><b>Strategic Energy Partnership update – John Martin (Solution Strategy &amp; Coordination Lead, E.ON)</b></p> <p>JM presented his slides</p>

Ref	Agenda Item
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He provided an overview of the purpose of the partnership which is a 15-year agreement. The year 1 anniversary has just been reached.</li> <li>• There are 4 strategic themes which link into all the pathways</li> <li>• A high-level overview of the work that has been done via the partnership so far was provided e.g. work with residents on home upgrade grants/ eco project, SME pilots through to talking to larger B2B companies and working with some of the biggest employers on renewable energy projects. Also, work has taken place looking at heat networks with the Council and how to get more renewable energy. Furthermore, work has taken place on apprenticeships and employment and how to get that local supply chain in place for what we need in the future.</li> <li>• A 15-year agreement is in place, with year one complete. An energy masterplan has now been worked on, looking at how to achieve the most in the remaining 14 years, ranging from projects with shorter term benefits against long term projects that will affect the biggest change. E.On have utilised Mott McDonald as consultants, alongside other entities to establish what is possible – this is due to go back to SEP board in next two weeks to get outcomes and to ensure that the next 14 years deliver change. Terminology is an important aspect; how do we start to simplify that to get to our residents and employers on board.</li> <li>• RP added that the masterplan is very important piece of work to determine where the SEP can add this biggest value, who with and where the focus should be. CKn stated that it is about the linkages between all of the groups, that there are so many connections, effort is needed to make sure everything is brought together; SEP is one way to achieve this.</li> <li>• MJ thanked JM for his presentation and overview.</li> </ul>
5.0	<p><b>Seizing opportunities for external funding- how we go about this and what can we do to support each other to do this well - Bret Willers (Head of Climate Change &amp; Sustainability, CCC)</b></p> <p>BW presented his slides looking at what can be done collectively and creatively to secure funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BW advised that a collaborative approach is needed, how can the group work together to create an economy of scale, what are the group strengths and weaknesses, what is the best approach to take when bidding for funding.</li> <li>• Crowd funding is a creative route. Swansea and Teesside, less wealthy Authorities have received funding and used crowd funding to match monies received and boost funds. BW stated that it is about different ways of working and looking at partnership and tactical approaches. The communities can also access funds and access monies, but only if they are skilled to do so – this needs thinking about in terms of support.</li> <li>• There are two open examples which are currently being looked at. The Horizon 20:20 programme still exists post Brexit. It is a collaborative effort between the universities across Europe, working in partnership with Authorities and other organisations to address live issues. There are different sums of money available, but it is very competitive. A meeting has been held with university so may be able to a project to pursue,</li> <li>• National Lottery fund – our shared future – £0.5 to £1.5. million – This is formal partnerships applying for funding to conduct projects to enable people who would not normally engage with the sustainability agenda. An opportunity exists to look at this as a project.</li> <li>• BW proposed a workshop session to look at funding and ways forward. Note that National lottery needs an application by end of year and is a one-off opportunity. BW asked if the Group agreed that there is merit for pursuing?</li> <li>• MR advised that Horizon is a big overhead in bidding. MR offered his support. SW added that it is a good idea and there are other things that we can bring to the table for finance, a workshop is a good idea to see what can be interlinked.</li> </ul>



Ref	Agenda Item
	<p><b>Action: Partnership Funding workshop to be set up to progress in October-BW &amp; MB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MJ – thanked BW and added that this is very useful feedback</li> </ul>
6.0	<b>AOB</b>
6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CKn raised an item for the next agenda – the City Centre South planned major redevelopment will lead to be areas being made available by the developer – the Group should be thinking about how this can be used, thinking about the various pathways e.g. using this to trial, repair, upcycle and growing projects. CKn suggested working with the developer as there is a major opportunity right in the middle of the City to try new ideas.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: Jenny Batchelor from the Council to be invited to the next session to discuss this.</b></p>
6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MJ advised the group that this is Manjit Bath's last meeting. MJ thanked Manjit for all her hard work supporting the Board members, Pathway groups and various meetings.</li> </ul>
6.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MJ thanked everyone for the contributions and closed the meeting. Board Dates for 2025 will be circulated to Board Members with a frequency of three meetings a year.</li> </ul>